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American War Memorials in Lviv in the Ukraine

The Cemetery of the Defenders is a memorial and a burial place for the Poles and their allies who died in Lviv (Polish: Lwów) during the hostilities of the Polish-Ukrainian War and Polish-Soviet War between 1918 and 1920. It contains a memorial to the American pilots that flew with the Polish 7th Escadrille, better known as the Kościuszko Squadron, which was one of the units of the Polish Air Force during the Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1921. Three American pilots



are buried here. Sixteen Americans joined the 7th Squadron. The Americans included Merian C. Cooper, a former U.S. Air Service pilot in France and POW in a German camp, and Cedric E. Fauntleroy, an experienced WWI pilot who had served on the Western Front. In 1920 the Kościuszko Squadron made over 400 combat flights. Cedric Fauntleroy and Merian C. Cooper received Poland's highest military decoration: the Virtuti Militari. Both the memorial and the graves were destroyed under the Soviets in 1969. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the monument was rebuilt in the 1990's. Today, three American Isolated Burials are located adjacent to the monument: LT Edmund P. Graves; CPT Arthur H. Kelly; and LT T.V. MacCallum. All three were shot down in the area in 1919 and 1920. See their stories on our website. Lviv has been damaged in the current war and we have no word on the current status of this site.

And in Poltava.....

Poltava Air base was activated in 1940 but fell to German forces in 1941 and they occupied it until 1943. In 1944 Eighth and Fifteenth US Air Forces used the airfield as a heavy bomber staging field for seven shuttle bombing missions known as Operation Frantic. Although a significant event for Poltava, this WWII episode is not very well-known. Operation Frantic was a series of seven shuttle bombing operations during World War II conducted by American aircraft based in Great Britain and southern Italy which then landed at three Soviet airfields in Ukraine. The aircraft in the Ukraine then flew bombing missions en route to their bases in Italy and Great Britain. The operation ran between June and September, 1944. The airfield was poorly defended and there were significant losses to German attacks and with increasing inter-Allied hostility and changing strategic requirements there was soon a reduced need for Ukrainian bases. After the end of the Second World War the airfield was rebuilt as a Soviet base with a permanent single runway and hard stands. Today there is a memorial on the Air Base as well as a memorial in the town commemorating Operation Frantic. Again, we have no word on how these sites have weathered the current conflict.

